

## **August is National Immunization Month**

National Immunization Awareness Month is the best time to remind loved ones and co-workers about keeping their vaccinations current. Especially, since August is the time of year when children are starting back to school and flu season is just around the corner.

## **What is Immunization?**

Immunization is the process by which an individual is exposed to an infectious agent in a controlled way. When given to a healthy person, vaccines that contain germs that have been killed or weakened trigger the immune system to respond and thus build immunity. As a result, the body builds a protective shield or “immunization” from the infection later on in life. Immunizations are for people of all ages, from newborns to senior citizens. It is an effective way to prevent the spread of serious diseases.

Before the development of vaccines, people could only develop a natural immunity to a virus by getting and surviving a disease. Now, we have a safer, more effective alternative.

## **Why should children be immunized?**

- Prevents the spread of serious diseases
- Protects the health of our community

## **Why should adults be immunized?**

- Some adults were never vaccinated as children
- Newer vaccines were not available when some adults were children
- Immunity can begin to fade over time
- The aging process makes us more susceptible to serious disease caused by common infections (e.g., flu, pneumococcus)

## **What does this mean to you?**

Immunizations have eradicated common diseases like polio making them a distant memory. Today, with simple vaccinations, diseases causing serious complications and even death are prevented. At present, there are vaccines available to protect children and adults against at least fifteen (15) life-threatening or crippling diseases, which include measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, polio, diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough).

## **Keeping up with your vaccine schedule**

It is not easy to remember when you or a loved one's vaccination is due. We can blame this on our busy lives, but the outcome from not being vaccinated could be serious. To get a complete schedule of recommended childhood vaccines, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm>

To get a complete schedule of recommended adult vaccinations, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/adult-schedule.htm>

To learn more about immunizations and their risk factors, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/default.htm>

To assist you in determining what vaccinations you may need as an adult, visit

[http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/downloads/adult/06-07/adult\\_vac\\_scrn\\_gen.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/downloads/adult/06-07/adult_vac_scrn_gen.pdf). Print the Adult Vaccination

Screening Form and take it to your doctor for discussion.

Resources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)